

NSC BRIEFING

23 March 1960

BACKGROUND

IRAQ

25X1 I. [] increase in internal tensions as Iraqi Communists bear brunt of Qasim's political maneuvering.

A. Recent security precautions noted include increased military patrolling in Baghdad, step-up in army training activities,

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B. Military Governor-General Abdi issued order on 23 March banning carrying of weapons, except shotguns, within all major Iraqi towns.

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D. Major clash between Communists and nationalists reported by Basra consulate as occurring there on 19 March. Fifteen injured and 50 to 75 arrested.

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III. Major disturbances between Communist and non-Communist elements have become increasingly likely.

A. Moves by government to limit Communist influence have emboldened anti-Communists and seem to have made Communist leaders feel they must stage some demonstration of strength.

State Department review completed

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B. Communist-controlled newspapers are continuing to snipe at regime and Communist leaders were apparently behind rash of minor strikes last week.

IV. Qasim appears to be falling back on the army as his chief political support and key army officers, mostly anti-Communist, will probably play a vital role in future developments.

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